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LETTERS 1689-1846.

FROM ORIGINALS AND COPIES IN THE COLLECTION
OF THE VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

LETTER FROM COL. NICHOLAS SPENCER,* SECRETARY OF THE
COLONY OF VIRGINIA, ADDRESSED TO THE LORDS OF THE PRIVY
COUNCIL, UPON OCCASION OF THE ACCESSION OF WILLIAM
& MARY TO THE CROWN OF ENGLAND.

May it please y^r Lordships,

The duty incumbent on y^e office of Secretary of this Dominion, in which I have had the hon^r for some yeares to serve, obliges me to give y^r Lordships an account of the present state of affaires, & let y^r Lordships know such occurrences as have happened here of lat (Viz^t) that the mutations in England have extended their influences as far as these remoter Dominions; for noe sooner did y^e news of the late admired transactions arrive here tho' but imperfectly noised, & that with little probability of truth, but it begun to be in the mouths of the mobile that there was noe King in England, & consequently noe Government here; upon this surmise followed rumors & reports that y^e Papists in Maryland, together with those amongst us, have machinated to bring great numbers of fforaigne Indians to the destruction of the Protestants of both Dominions, & had prefixed a certaine time when the blow was to be given:—these, tho' false & groundless reports, raised great fears & jealousies in the minds of y^e multitude, & soon made them gather together

*Nicholas Spencer of Westmoreland Co., Va., formerly of Cople, Bedfordshire, Eng., was Secretary of State of Virginia, 1679-1689, and for a time President of the Council. For a sketch of him and his family see this Magazine. The excitement caused by the first vague rumors of the flight of James II seems to have been general throughout the Colony: but this feeling was especially strong in the Northern Neck where Spencer lived.

in armes to repell y^e supposed designs of y^e Papists; & soe great a flame was kindled by the blasts of popular breath, that if it had not been timely prevented by y^e vigilance care & prudence of some of the Councell, & others, in the very beginning of it must have unavoidably proved fatall to both Dominions; & tho' it soon appeared those rumors were vaine & idle, & the people in some sort quieted, yet others like Hydra's head sprung up in their places, to y^e great disquiet of this Government, & it was rationally believed that the difficulties of keeping this Dominion free from tumults, divisions & depredations would have been insuperable had not the news of the happy accession of the Prince & Princess of Orange to the Crown of England arrived here, with orders from their Maj^{ties} most Hon'ble privy Councell for proclaiming of the same, given check to unruly spiritts; w^{ch} Proclamation was effected at James Citty with all possible speed & with as great solemnity as the shortness of time & the necessity of the present circumstances would admitt of; & the Proclamations are now goeing forth into all the Counties of this Dominion, that none may be ignorant of it, & the great cause of their tumults (Viz^t the beliefe that there was noe King in England, & consequently noe Government here) may be removed & peace & tranquillity restored & established among them, w^{ch} that it may succeed, is y^e dayly prayer of all loyall subjects here & particularly of

Right Hon'ble,

Yo^r Lordships' most dutifull

& most obed^t Ser^t

NICHO. SPENCER.

James Citty.

April 29th 1689.

JOHN PARADISE* TO WILLIAM LEE.

London, Sep^r. 26th, 1769.William Lee, Esq^r.

Sir:

I received your obliging Letter and return you many thanks for it. The Acct. Cur't is right, and the Bill for the sum of two hundred and twenty-five pounds, nine shillings, and ten pence, being the bal'ce due to me on the above mentioned Acct. has been punctually paid me by Mr. Russell. If I can be of any service to you here, please to direct your letters to me in Charles Street near Cavendish Square. Mrs. Paradise joins me in every good wish to you and your Lady.

I am Sir

Your most Hble Servant

John Paradise.

[Addressed] To William Lee, Esq^r, St. Hellens Parish, Ipswich. [Seal with Monogram J. P.] [Endorsed] Jno. Paradise, Recd Sept. 27. 1769.

ALEXANDER M^cCLENAHAN† TO THOMAS ADAMS.

Sir,

Staunton, April ye 26th, 1778.

The bad State of health I have been in for some time, & am still likely to Continue in has rendered me unfitt to serve my

*John Paradise was the son of Peter Paradise, a Greek, who was British consul in one of the Eastern Mediterranean cities. John Paradise was educated in England and settled in London. He was a man of cultivation and high character, was a member of some of Johnson's clubs and is mentioned by Boswell and Fanny Burney. In 1769, as "John Paradise, Esquire, of Charles Street, Berkeley Square," he was married to Lucy, daughter and co-heiress of Phillip Ludwell, formerly of Virginia. John Paradise died in 1796 and his wife removed in 1805 to Virginia, where she died in 1819. Their only child, Lucy married in 1787, Count Barziza, a Venetian nobleman, whose children came to Virginia and lived in Williamsburg. Several of the Barziza served in the Confederate Army and have descendants living in the South. Wm. Lee married another daughter of Phillip Ludwell.

†Alexander McClanahan of Augusta County, Va., was a son of Robert McClanahan, the immigrant, and brother of Captain Robert McClanahan, who was killed in the battle of Point Pleasant. Alexander McClanahan had himself, commanded a company in that action. He was Lieutenant Colonel 7th Virginia, February 29, 1776, Colonel, March 22, 1777, to rank from October 7, 1776 and resigned May 13, 1778. For notices of this family see Waddell's "Annals of Augusta County."

Country in such a manner as I would wish to do, & as there is no appearance of my being able to take ye field this Campaign, I would not wish to receive pay without haveing some hopes of being able to render my Country some service for it.

I am informed since I left Camp that leave to resign must be obtained from Congress, I therefore take ye liberty of troubling you with presenting my Comision & hope for ye above reasons a resignation will be granted as nothing else could have Induced me to quit ye service. Should it be thought necessary that a Certificate from ye paymaster & clothier Gen^{ls} should be produced to shew that I am not indebted to ye States, ye bearer Capt. Crocket when he gets to Camp will be able to procure it. If leave is granted I must trouble you with geting a Certificate mentioning ye time & reasons of my resigning & give ye bearer.

I am Sir

Your Hum Servant

Alex^r McClenahan.

RICHARD LEE* TO THOMAS ADAMS.

Lee Hall, June 29th, 1778.

Sir,

I see the haughty Court of G. B. & their Commissioners have sent an insulting Message offering Pardons to the Sovereign free and Independ^t State of America. I have not the least room to doubt that it will be treated with the Contempt it deserves. If America could exert itself these invaders might be driven off the Continent. Our Country seems to be asleep & I think our Government wants energy.

If you have a Spare moment I shall be glad to hear from you. I am S^r yr Hble Servt,

Richard Lee.

[Addressed] The Honble Thomas Adams Esqr. a Delegate in Congress at York in Pensilvania. fav'd by Maj. Turberville.

*The few letters written by Richard Lee of "Lee Hall," Westmoreland, are of equal brevity with the above. He was an uncle of "Light Horse Harry" Lee, and was a member of the House of Burgesses from Westmoreland, 1757-1774, of the Conventions of 1775-6, and of the House of Delegates, 1777-1793. See Lee's "Lee of Virginia," 287-291.

MRS. DOUGLAS TO GEORGE BRENT*, 1771.

Dear Sir,

I wrote to you the 5th or 6th of this month since then have been honoured with yours by Captain Hure, which made me very happy to hear you past over the last winter with such good health. I mention the children very particularly in my last, shall only tell you they are very well and Archie continues at Hamilton school where they will be for some time. I am sorry that you took no more notice of that part of my letter wherein I desire you would write me the place in England our family came from you probably may smile and think it a whim, but I have my reason for asking it, otherwise I would not have given you the trouble which I hope in your next you will indulge me in that particular. It gives me concern to hear of poor Mr. Clifton's death. I wish Mr. Slaughter may use my Aunt well on this occasion. I am afraid if she is in his power he will exert it too roughly, however, I hope, she will always meet with friends to see she has justice done her. Mr. Douglass of Douglass was married on the 13th of this month to Lady Lucy Graham, the ceremony was performed at the Duke of Montrose's House, London by Dr. Markam, Bishop of Chester, who was once his master. They went out immediately after the ceremony was performed to Petersham, a seat of the Duke of Queensbury's, where they are to spend some time, he is not expected in Scotland till autumn. I had a letter from Mr. Riddle relating to my affairs which I hope are in a prosperous

*The first of these letters is from a copy sent to the editor many years ago by a descendant of the Cliftons. The second copy was recently furnished by Mr. H. P. Chilton, Washington, D. C. Catherine Douglas, the writer, was daughter of Robert Brent of Virginia, and married, Oct. 1, 1754, James Douglas, a Scotch merchant, of Dumfries, Va., and a brother of the last Duchess of Douglas, who took so prominent a part in the famous "Douglas Case." James Douglas and his wife went to Scotland where they resided at "Rose Hill," near Glasgow. He died in 1767 and she in 1819. Her only son, Col. Archibald Douglas, of the English Army, died in 1804. See this Magazine, XIX, 94-96. "Wm. Clifton," was William Clifton of Fairfax County, who married Elizabeth, sister of Robert Brent. He died intestate, but the will of his widow was proved in Fairfax in 1773. We hope later on to publish notes on the Clifton family. The reference to Dr. Markham being Mr. Douglas's "master," means that he was his tutor.

condition, should anything occur with regard to them wherein your advice would be necessary, hope you will not let it be wanting. I wish you all success and happiness in your affairs. I am with respectfull compliments to your self & family
Dear Sir, your ever dutifull & affec. Daughter

Catherine Douglass.

Bothwell Castle—6th June 1771.

Letter to George Brent of Woodstock, Va.

MRS. DOUGLAS TO ROBERT BRENT, VA.

George Street (Edinboro)

April 22d, 1791.

(To Robert Brent),

With what satisfaction do I read over my dear nephew's agreeable accounts he has given of his family and friends in general—and believe me I shall ever find myself warmly interested in a continuance of their fair prospects. I agree with you in thinking your dear little ones would never be placed in a more happy situation than where they are. Mrs. Young I know is amiable and will do everything in her power to contribute to their happiness—independent of the strong relationship she has to them. I make no doubt but she finds her tender care rewarded more and more every day by these sweet infants and who, I hope in God, will live to do her honour. I often think on her, and beg you will make my remembrance to her and Mr. Young. How do I feel the felicity in which you all partake of having such a friend and director amongst you as Bishop Carroll whose character I much esteem—and am no stranger to—having often heard him spoke (sic) of with that regard due to his great virtues. I felicitate Mrs. Carroll on being so happy a mother. Mr. Mattingly had told me he met with Bishop Carroll in England—he also mentioned several young gentlemen of family from Maryland that he had met with abroad when he was with Sir Robert Gerald—and during his stay at Liege some of them were under his care.

I am happy to hear Mrs. Digges has got a son—of which Mr. Graham's letter informed me some days before I got yours. I understand he was a very welcome little guest and hope he is not to be the only one.

I have the pleasure to inform you that my son has given up military life and is become the country gentleman—he has purchased an estate lately with a good mansion on it—where we are to go this summer to live—and to give up a town life for awhile. I am told it is a beautiful place (the name Rose Hill) with wood, water and every other advantage that can make it pleasant—however, of this I hope to give you a fuller account after being settled awhile there. How is your brother going on with improvements at Woodstock, write soon and let me know all about it. I reverence every shrub that grows about it and often are my thoughts there, as indeed they are at present, in which mood I take my leave, and am joined by your cousins in warmest affection to you and yours and with our remembrance to all friends remain, my dear nephew your ever affectionate aunt

Catherine Douglass.

Mr. Darnall is well and likes this country much better than he did at first—he says he shall have a regret at leaving it, he seems well disposed and I am happy in an opportunity of showing him attention.

JUDGE CYRUS GRIFFIN* TO DR. SAMUEL STUART GRIFFIN.

My dear Stuart,

Rhode Island September 18th.

Your prescription has been executed thus far, but I confess to not a feeling or visable purpose; my limbs are much swelled and frame weaker; but [illegible word] my small appetite has not diminished or slow power of digestion decayed. Doctor Post of N. Y. thought if you were present you would see the

*Judge Cyrus Griffin had been President of the Continental Congress. His wife was Lady Christina Stuart, daughter of the Earl of Traquair. This undated letter was probably written late in Judge Griffin's life. He died Dec. 14, 1810. Newport had evidently become a health resort for Southerners. For Judge Griffin and his family see this Magazine I, 254-256.

propriety of omitting the Bark in my situation, and trusting to Nature and the salt air, and accordingly I have omitted at present to proceed as you directed; but if you and my dear Brother should think it best to go on I will do so.

I am very well situated in this place in every respect, the kindest people imaginable I board with, and yet I had a thousand times rather be in York, among my beloved Friends.

My plans are not yet ascertained, and indeed it is impossible to do so at present—but I shall go not any further Eastward, as I find it very Cold here, having fire all day.

This is a sort of Bulletin. My love to dear Sally & kiss the dear Infant—and best affects to my dear Brother. Any news from York &c. &c.

Affect. father

Cyrus Griffin.

please to direct for me, at Mrs. Cottin's[?]. Thames Street, New Port, Rhode Island.

Pray who have you made nurse to the sweet boy? And shall we not want a man servant for the house? do let me know all things that will be wanting towards housekeeping, &c. &c. that I may arrange accordingly, so far as possible. how are all the neighbors?

[Addressed]

Doctor Stuart Griffin,
York Town,
Virginia.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE ATTACK ON RHODE ISLAND 1778.

Providence August 5, 1778*.

5. This day the Enemy set fire to four of their frigates, and a number of other Vessels laying off the N. End of Prudence Island, being attacked by two French Ships.

*This account of the unsuccessful attack by the allied forces on Rhode Island was communicated by Col. John Banister to the Virginia Delegates in Congress. Col. Banister, whose home was in Dinwiddie County, Va., was a member of Congress March 16, 1778 to Sept. 24, 1779. He saw service several times during the Revolution as an officer of State troops. For notice of him and his family see this Magazine, XI, 164-165

6. All the Troops marched to Tivertown appointed as a Place of Rendesvos the Count D'Estaing laying off the Harbour of Newport.

7. The troops are collecting.

8. Count D' Estaing with his Squadron Sailed up the Middle Passage leading into the Harbour of N. Port, which occasioned a heavy cannonade between the Enemy's Batteries & his Squadron which came too under Conanicut Island; the Enemy burnt 18 dwelling houses next Withers Lines, and in the evening retired to their works about Newport.

9. Having intelligence from Deserters that the Enemy had retired within their Lines the army was put in Motion, the right wing embarked and took Possession of their Works at the N. end of the Island. The Remainder of the army followed immediately—About 2 o'clock P. M. a fleet of about 25 sail of English Vessels were discovered standing in N. Port. They came to for the Night off Point Judith. The wind being S. E. W. the Count could not get out.

10. About 8 o'clock A. M. the Count stood out of the Harbour the wind being N. N. E. The british fleet immediately put to Sea, as the Squadron passed N. Port a heavy cannonade commenced between the Batteries & the Squadron

11. The army was to have moved down towards Newport but is prevented by a Storm.

12. The Storm increases.

13. The storm raged violently. Marquees and Tents are torn down—some soldiers and many Horses perished. Most of the ammunition damaged, & all the Men wet. 28 desert from the Enemy.

14. This day was employed in drying the Cloths, issuing ammunition and repairing the damage done by the Storm.

15. The army was put in Motion at 6 o'clock and took post about 2 o'clock about 2 miles from Newport. 7 Deserters.

16. The army threw up works for their own defence, & this Night began to throw up works against the Enemy's Right. 6 Deserters.

17. Batteries not complete. The Enemy cannoded our Men at work. 8 Deserters.

18. Our Batteries not complete; the cannonade continued. 3 Men wounded. 10 Deserters.

19. This Morning opened a Battery of four 18 Pounders and silenced their advanced Redoubts. One Man killed & two wounded. 10 Deserters.

20th. Another four Gun Battery opened at 2 o'clock the Squadron appeared off. At 5 o'clock Gen'l Sullivan received advice from the Count that he had fallen in with L'd Howes fleet consisting of 12 Sail of the Line, 10 Frigates 4 Bomb Ketches, & 4 row Gallies with 6 fire ships & some Transports having on board, upwards of 3000 Troops.

That he took the Senegal of 16 Guns & a Bomb Catch, that his Squadron was Shattered and must sail immediately for Boston to be repaired. The Lanquedoc having lost her Mast, Bowsprit, the Tonaut dismasted, & the Caesar missing, Gen'l Green & the Marquis Went on board.

21st. The Squadron put to Sea—the works go on slowly—the Marquis relieved.

22d. Cannonade continued & our covered way completed.

23d. Opened two Batteries 300 yards in Front of our former ones consisting of eleven 18 & 24 pounders & two 10 inch Mortars, one 18 Pounder burst & one 10 inch Mortar split. The cannonade continued warm one man killed & two wounded heard of the arrival of Caesar at Boston. The Enemy have several small cruizers on each side the island.

24. Cannonade cont'd.

25. Began to fortify the No. end of the Island to secure a Retreat & began to remove some Cannon and Baggage.

26. Two Frigates arrived at Newport. 5 Deserters.

27. Two ships & a Brig arrived this day: last Night two Subs & twenty four Men chiefly from Varnums Brigade were carried off by the Enemy, owing to the carelessness of a Militia Picket which they were going to relieve. It was determined to retire to the No. end of Island, but for certain Reasons it was deferred.

28. Cannonade continued, all our heavy Baggage & stores being removed the army was put in motion at 8 o'clock P. M. and arrived at the N. end of the Island at 3 o'clock next morning.

29th. About 7 o'clock the advanced Corps under Col. H. B. Livingston on the East Road, & Lt. Col. Laurens on the West Road, were attacked by the Enemy's Columns & were obliged to retreat by their Superior Numbers to Quaker Hill, where they made a gallant Resistance. Col. Livingston being reinforced by Lieu. Col. Sprual with Col. Shepards Regiment gave the Enemy a check. The Enemy was soon reinforced both to the right & left upon which our Troops retired near to the Front of the army which was formed in Line of Battle. The Enemy took Possession of two Eminences in advance of our right, and Quaker hill on the left, where they placed several Pieces of Artillery & began a cannonade on our advanced Post on the right.

They had also two Frigates an armed Brig & two schooners in the middle Passage which annoyed our left Flank, while their Infantry advanced to drive in our light corps, & gain a little Redoubt which supported our right, our Troops being re-inforced the Enemy gave way but rallied and kept re-inforcing as we did, till near 1500 Men engaged on our right.

The action continued severe from 2 to 3 o'clock when they broke a second and retreated in confusion leaving many killed & wounded, but the skirmishing between the advanced Parties and a cannonade continued till Evening our loss is uncertain, computed about 60 killed & 160 Missing & wounded—among whom are several officers. The Enemy's loss was considerable, from what we have been able to learn particularly in officers. We took 2 officers and 20 Men. The officers & Soldiers during the action behaved to a charm. The Artillery has great Merit.

30. A constant Cannonade this day & skirmishing with the advanced Troops but with little damage. It being determined to leave the Island, our stores were moved at 6 o'clock P. M. & at 8 o'clock the troops were put in Motion and embarked at Howland's Ferry for this Place, where the rear arrived about 3 o'clock without alarming the Enemy who lay within one Mile of the army, & without the loss of Men or stores.

Camp at White Plains,

Dear Sir:

September 4th 1778.

Above you have the most circumstantial account of the attack upon Rhode Island and of the Safe Retreat Gen. Sullivan has made with everything belonging to the army down to a spade. This is a Journal of Major Gibb's. I hope no construction may be put upon the Departure of the Count D'Estaing that may tend to weaken the alliance or weaken that amity & Concord which if continued will be productive of such happy consequences to both Nations.

In the warmth of Gen. Sullivan's Zeal he has in his orders of the 29th ult. censured with great Imprudence the Counts sailing for Boston.

I shall be with you next Week & shall set out in a few daies for Virg'a.

I hope there will be a Representation without me.

I am dear Sir Y^r obed. Servant J. Banister.

My best Regards to Harvey & other Friends in Congress Jno. Bannister's letter Sep. 1778 White Plains (No. 90)

THOMAS CATLETT* TO JOHN C. BOWIE, 1807.

[Addressed] Mr. John C. Bowie, Fredericksb'g.

Dear John

This is what I call a beginning of our promised Correspond-

*We are indebted to a member of the Bowie family for permission to copy the three letters which follow. Like most personal letters they give a view of things which does not often appear in official documents. The first was written at the time when war with England was expected on account of the Leopard-Chesapeake affair. The young men of Caroline County (as they have shown in every war which this country has been engaged) were not more timid than other people, but, as this letter shows, our ancestors were (like ourselves) not all heroes who rushed enthusiastically to war.

The second letter is of onterest to Richmond people. We are accustomed to think of the Richmond of 1808 as a sleepy little town, very leisurely in its business methods and much given to hospitality, yet here we have a homesick youth who probably had never seen a town larger than Fredericksburg, describing the Richmond of that day in terms similiar to those with which another country boy of the present day might describe New York.

The third letter, written when war had begun and Virginia was threatened with invasion gives a much brighter view of the warlike spirit of Caroline men and of the hospitality of Richmond. In the spring and summer of 1813 a British fleet under Admiral Cockburn ravaged the Va. coasts, but were checked in the brilliant little action of Craney Island, Norfolk.

ence, which I hope will not Cease when there is any matter to Communicate. I must give you a small sketch of the proceedings of our Volunteers. They are to have a meeting on Wednesday evening to consider of such Resolutions as will be proper to be drawn up, and sent to the President; the purport of which, is to offer their services to the Government in Case of an emergency, there is a very great division in the Company some say they will not go, let what will be the Call. R. Threshly and S. Henshaw say they will withdraw their names under a plea that they did not know the motives on which the Company was embodied & that they thought it was nothing more than to get rid of Boutwell as their Capt. Others say they have some business to attend to, that if they leave their employments, they will be ruined, And upon the whole, there will be so many dissenting voices that ye remainder of the men after those who will (if allowed) withdraw their names, will not constitute a Company. Now you see my dear fellow every attempt (of what nature or kind soever) in Port Royal, everlastingly falls through, and any institution of that sort was more to be talked of, and their Cockades and uniforms to be admired by the lower class of People than anything else. There is very few who would not shrink from the service of War. After Wednesday I'll let you know the issue. We are to have a barbacue at the old School-house near Tennants on the seventeenth of this month where we shall have a vast Concourse of Girls. I wish fervently you could be with us. It is made up by the Country gentlemen altogether. They will have one in Town soon after * * * I am with the Sentiments of warm regards

Yor Friend

Thos Catlett.

Green Hill, July 6, 1807.

THOMAS CATLETT TO JNO C. BOWIE, 1808.

[Addressed] Mr. John C. Bowie, near Port Royal.

Richmond 29th Sept. 1808.

Dear Bowie

I feel it a duty incumbent upon me to let you hear something of your departed friend, indeed was I to neglect it, you might have reason to Complain; as there has allways been a tie of friendship between us that appears to interest each in the welfare of the other, and altho' you may not be very anxious to hear from me, supposing that my changing situations, was a voluntary act, and that I must have known every Circumstance relative to my situation, before I engaged, and therefore Conclude that I now spend my time very happily. But my dear friend if this is your impression, it is a very mistaken one—For altho I am pleased with my wages, also with my accomodations, and the young men who write with me, still I feel the loss of the society of yourself and all the rest of my friends about the old habitation; another circumstance which renders my time more disagreeable, is the confinement, as it is much greater than I calculated on; when I get up in the morning which is generally a little after sunrise, I am engaged until sunset, and then would Cruize about a little, for recreation, but the people of Richmond are the most unsocial Creatures on earth, for I am told a young man may live here twelve months, and be no better acquainted, than the day he came, indeed its the Case with me except the young men of the office, I have not made a single acquaintance. So when I go out of the office at night, I generally take a solatery walk; and then repair to a much frequented tavern where all are strangers, and for that reason march to bed, get up in the morning and to work again—I can assure you it is with the greatest difficulty I have refrained from taking the Stage to the Bowling Green, and bid'g adieu to Richmond—When I first came here for two or three days I was amused with the noveltys, but they have all become quite dull, and to speak the sentiments of my heart, I never in all the Course of my life was so Completely tired of a place.

Some nights would willingly give \$20 to be in Port Royal and if it was not for the idea of being ridiculous, would start tomorrow. I think if I contain myself until Christmas it will be as much, and God-- the people in Richmond, they should not keep me longer. By — John there is no place on earth like our old native spot * * * As to the news of this place, I know nothing, & therefore cannot communicate a word. This much I can say, that it is the last place in the State of Virginia I should wish to live in, for let you go where you will the people all appear to be going as if the devil sent them and end[?] about their business, and would not speak to you to save your life hardly. Present my love to Papa, Mama & the girls, and tell the girls I am very unhappy * * * And believe me to be with every sentiment of friendship

Y^{rs} Thos Catlett.

C. S. JONES TO JOHN C. BOWIE.

[Addressed] Mr. John C. Bowie, Port Royal, Caroline County.

Richmond 1st April, 1813.

Dear John

When you discover that some of my acquaintances have rec'd letters from me of a date Anterior to this, I fear you will accuse me of partiality but if you'll for a moment reflect on the hard duty which a soldier has to do when under regular discipline, and the extreme dulness and insipidity of repeating one thing over too often, you will I hope pardon my neglect.

As we came down here to oppose our expected invasion from the British, I shall first give you an account of their late movements, and present position, that is as far as I know about it. When we first arrived here it was reported that a British brig & schooner & several launches had arrived as high up as Hoods on James River & were reinforcing every day with the avowed purpose of landing men to make an attack on Richmond. Hoods is about 40 miles below this where we have a small fort

but by no means sufficient to keep off a superior British force, and it is confidently believed that if they had made the attempt 4 weeks ago they might have plundered the town of a vast deal of valuable property & went off probably without injury, but this alarming step has inspired the inhabitants with such military ardor that I am quite convinced that any attempt which they may hereafter make even if the inhabitants are unassisted by Country militia will be vain & fruitless.

As we came into town we found nearly the whole disposable volunteer and militia force upon the parade ground going through the manual exercise, marching, counter marching & performing evolutions which I never saw before, all very regular as Clock-work. Just before we arrived at this place we were met by Capt. Gambols troop of calvary & escorted along the whole line of infantry and artillery, as we passed each superior officer we saluted him & were in our turn saluted. I assure you the scene was truly august & military.

Since our arrival in town there has been seldom a day that a cooked dinner has not been sent to Camp for us & when we could be spared from duty almost every man of us have been invited out to dine.

The first two or three days after our arrival the weather was raw & cold & we passed of our time rather uncomfortably in tents, but since the warm & fair weather has set in, we sleep sound and Comfortably after going to rest, but previous to this part of the Ceremony as soon as night sets in we build a large fire in the old field where we tell tales & sing songs till we all get very sleepy—W^m D. Pope with his keen satire forms no inconsiderable part of our amusement, and he makes as fine a soldier as he is an agreeable Companion—he is up in the morning by day light with his check shirt & Curry Comb taking care of his horse. It is positively Contrary to orders to break silence in ranks but the captain has often to reprimand him for this offence, his reply generally is that he is imparting instruction to his fellow soldier & hopes he will not be punished for doing so laudable an act, notwithstanding he is disobeying orders, he makes this reply in so earnest a way that the Capt. is compelled to turn off with a smile.

When we came here we found no other country cavalry except part of the Louisa troop, the Balance being on the river acting as a line of expresses from Hampton & Norfolk. This remnant was united to ours, which makes us muster very large. Watson the Capt. of the Louisa troop having an older Commission than our Capt.; has been put over us, he is a man of fine military talents & with whom almost every member of our troop are much pleased. We should have cut a poor figure under our own officers, but as it is, we are said to be the best equipped & best disciplined Country troop in the whole State.

We are on hard duty every day at least six hours & in the interval's have to cook our food rub down & feed our horses.

It is said the Governor issued orders today that we are to march to Portsmouth opposite Norfolk the day after tomorrow for what purpose I know not; but it is rumored that we are to escort 40 British deserters from that place to this. It is certain that there are 40 deserters in Portsmouth, but I have no idea that we are to be bothered with them. It is certain that there is not now a single British vessel in James river. They found it impossible to stay without jeopardizing the loss of every seaman. Letters have this day been rec'd stating they have left Hampton roads & retired to Linhaven bay.

I am told a Hornet has lately stung a Peacock so severely that she fainted away immediately, & expired in less than 15 minutes afterwards. I have no doubt but that there are many here and elsewhere who feel a lively sympathy for this unfortunate squeaking bird, but for my part I sincerely we had Hornets enough to extinguish the whole race.

Let my father and family know that I am in health & spirits. Write me everything I wish to know.

Yr's Sincerely

C. S. Jones

THOMAS RITCHIE* TO JEFFERSON ARCHER ACCEPTING CHALLENGE FROM JOHN HAMPDEN PLEASANTS.

Richmond, Feb. 24, 1846.

Dear Sir,

The message delivered to me, by you this morning from J. H. Pleasants, was nearly in these words:

"I am requested by Mr. Pleasants to inform you that he will be on the Chesterfield side of James River, tomorrow morning at sun-rise, armed with side-arms, without rifle, shot gun or musket, and accompanied by two friends similarly armed."

This disguised Challenge I protest against

First—because it is not in the form which is justified by men of honor, and to a great extent upheld by public opinion.

Second. Because it prevents that certainty of equal advantage recognized by all gentlemen as an essential of the duel or fair and chivalrous combat.

Third.—Because it gives the challenging party the privilege of selecting time, place and weapons; a right which according to all usage, belongs to the challenged.

Fourth—Because both time and place are so selected as to occasion great inconvenience and danger to all parties concerned from legal prosecution.

Fifth—Because the terms proposed are savage, sanguinary and revolting to the taste and judgment, not only of all honourable men, but of every man in the community and calculated to cast odium on any one who may be governed by them.

I am ready to receive a proper challenge from Mr. Pleasants but for the reasons above give I solemnly protest against the terms he has proposed,— on his head then must rest the blame

*On Feb. 27, 1846, John Hampden Pleasants, editor of the Richmond Whig, was killed in a duel with Thomas Ritchie, Jr., editor of the Richmond Enquirer. The quarrel arose from political differences. From the evidence given in the trial of Ritchie the duel seems to have been a savage affair, which ignored the usual requirements of "the code." Mr. Ritchie appears to have been absolutely right in his contention as to terms, but public opinion was so strong that he could not refuse to accept them.

and reproach which should be incurred from acting in defiance of these considerations.

Notwithstanding these objections, I shall be on the ground mentioned at sunrise.

Do not consider me as casting upon yourself the slightest reflection. I do not consider you in any way responsible for the message delivered this morning.

I am your obedient servant

(Signed) Thomas Ritchie.

To Jefferson Archer

[The letter in the possession of this Society is believed to be a contemporary copy.]